

REMARKS

Claims 15-25, 27 and 28 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 15, 27 and 28 are amended. Claim 26 is canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in that claim. Support for the amendments can be found in the claims as originally filed (see claim 26). No new matter is added. Reconsideration and allowance of the claims are respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action, at page 8, indicates that claims 26 and 27 recite allowable subject matter. Specifically, these claims are indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the features of the base claim and any intervening claims.

By this Amendment, the subject matter of claim 26 is incorporated into claim 15, and claim 26 is canceled. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the rejections over the applied references are moot, and allowance of independent claim 15 and dependent claims 16-25, 27 and 28 are respectfully requested.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

The Office Action rejects claims 15-21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0180604 to Zenger et al. ("Zenger") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,447,669 to Lain ("Lain") and U.S. Patent No. 6,524,737 to Tanii et al. ("Tanii") with evidentiary reference to U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0013732 to Farber et al. ("Farber"); rejects claims 15 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zenger and Lain in view of JP 10-046266 ("JP '266"); rejects claims 15, 18-21 and 23-25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zenger and Lain in view of FR 2827710 to Tedjar ("Tedjar"); rejects claim 22 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zenger in view of Tanii or Tedjar and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,548,037 to Leonard et al. ("Leonard"); rejects claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

over Zenger in view of Tedjar and further in view of of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2003/0134199 to Christian et al. ("Christian"); and rejects claim 28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Zenger in view of either Tanii or JP '266 and further in view of JP 10-287864 ("JP '864"). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claim 15 is amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 26 and claim 26 is canceled, thus rendering the above rejections moot. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested.

III. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, since the application has been amended in light of the indication of allowability recited in the Office Action, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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